

Congressman Blumenauer works to ensure that American families are safe, healthy, and economically secure. This means, in part, ensuring an economy that works for all Oregonians while safeguarding our environment through smart investments and appropriate oversight of the economic system.

[The Ongoing Financial Crisis](#)

[Creating Jobs and Helping the Middle Class](#)

[Trade and the International Economy](#)

The Ongoing Financial Crisis

The current credit crisis facing the United States is one of the greatest economic challenges that the country has faced. It can be squarely traced to the ideology of economic deregulation, leaving the government with few tools to address the reckless actions of many financial institutions until it was too late. Congressman Blumenauer rejects the idea that special interests reap all the rewards of their risky behavior, while the public has to clean up the mess.

Congressman Blumenauer is proud of the actions of the 111th Congress to reinvigorate the economy and put in place policies to provide greater financial institution and mortgage market oversight and accountability. He believes, however, that we must balance these efforts with others to help the hardest-hit American families, by expanding food stamps and unemployment insurance and taking an active role in stabilizing the housing market.

Creating Jobs and Helping the Middle Class

In recent years, the percentage of Americans able to find good jobs has decreased, incomes have stagnated for all but the richest Americans, and Americans are feeling less secure in their economic well-being. Congressman Blumenauer believes we need to do more to create good jobs, promote a society that grows together, and help ensure that economic shocks, like losing one's job or a major illness, don't become economic catastrophes.

The lack of modern transportation infrastructure continues to limit our ability to compete internationally. Congressman Blumenauer is calling for [a new national plan](#) that will revitalize

America's communities, economy, and infrastructure. Not only would a major new infrastructure investment effort spur economic growth, but it would directly create hundreds of thousands of new jobs on these important public works projects.

Congressman Blumenauer also strongly supports the rights of workers to organize and believes that a vibrant union movement is key to the continued strength of the middle class.

Employee Free Choice Act

Declining union membership in United States is not merely the result of changes in the economy or attitudes of American workers, but of a concerted attack to limit the rights of American workers to organize into unions. This has an historic opportunity to level the playing field between corporations and workers by passing the Employee Free Choice Act.

This critical piece of legislation would restore workers rights to organize by establishing stronger penalties for employer violation of employee rights, and would allow employees a choice to form a union by either the election process with majority sign up or by signing cards authorizing union representation.

Congressman Blumenauer renewed his sponsorship of the Employee Free Choice Act because human enterprise needs checks and balances -- whether it is a union or a corporation, the country must have effective oversight, enforcement of the laws, and accountability. Accountability is needed in Congress, on Wall Street, and at the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

Under Republican leadership, the NLRB, created by lawmakers to protect the legitimate rights of workers and to oversee union elections, has been reduced to a toothless tiger. In recent years workers seeking to form unions have been subjected to intimidation, indoctrination, threats and actual retaliation with no recourse through NLRB. A recent report by the Inspector General found "substantial" delays in the NLRB issuing decisions in pending cases. The impact of these delays fall disproportionately on workers who wait months for the NLRB to certify union elections and these workers have yet to attain collective bargaining and other benefits of union membership.

In addition to the direct attacks against unions and the NLRB's institutionalized delays, ideologues have waged a public opinion campaign against organized labor. There is no small amount of irony here: the same corporate interests that have driven the economy into the ground, systematically looted the Federal Treasury, and participated in criminal behavior in the name of greed and at the expense of their employees, are the ones arguing that the Employee Free Choice Act gives too much power to workers.

Congressman Blumenauer is proud to support the Employee Free Choice Act as a way to restore the balance long abandoned by Republican administrations, ideologues in Congress, and the virulent antiunion interests in business. Congressman Blumenauer looks forward to the

legislative process as this bill works its way through Congress and will thoughtfully consider alternative approaches should they strive to meet these same goals of effective oversight, enforcement of the laws, and accountability.

Trade and the International Economy

We live in a global economy, and international trade is a key force that can help lift up American families and create jobs. It is what links countries all over the world in a network of production that underpins global prosperity. More than 25% of the jobs in the Portland metro area are dependent on international trade, with jobs in export manufacturing paying an average of 18% higher than non-export related jobs. Nationally, exports accounted for 13 percent of U.S. economic activity in 2008, and supported millions of domestic jobs. In today's challenging economic times, it is critical for American industry to take advantage of opportunities for export-driven growth.

In the past, and especially under President Bush, trade policy became divisive and partisan, with the concerns of working families ignored in favor of special interests. As a member of the Ways and Means Committee, which exercises oversight of trade policy, Congressman Blumenauer believes we need to start a new and more honest conversation about international trade and how to take advantage of its benefits to consumers and the economy as a whole, while mitigating its more harmful impacts.

Congressman Blumenauer has been leading the successful fight to create a new model for trade agreements, which includes implementing fully enforceable labor and environmental standards. As a result of this effort, U.S. trade agreements now include protections for the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced labor, the effective abolition of child labor, and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. Congressman Blumenauer has championed efforts to make trade work better for poor people at home and abroad and use trade rules to promote the things that Oregonians care deeply about, such as human rights and environmental sustainability. President Obama has indicated that he wants to develop a new framework for trade that hinges on strong labor and environmental standards, enforcement and making sure that we have domestic policies in place to position America to succeed in today's global economy. Congressman Blumenauer looks forward to partnering with the President to advance this framework.

We have to do more to ensure that all Americans benefit from trade, and from the economic opportunities that trade can create. In those instances where workers lose their jobs through no fault of their own, workers deserve access to training that will position them to succeed as we

transition to a new economic environment. Skilled workers are going to be in higher demand and more Americans will be working at different jobs over the course of their careers. Congressman Blumenauer believes that, in addition to efforts to create good jobs and help the middle class in general, we need to do much more to prepare workers for the jobs of the future through life-long learning and strengthen our programs to help people make transitions from job to job.

Related Articles

{loadposition related}